

PRIME MINISTER

BRADFORD FOOTBALL CLUB FIRE

There is still a high level of radio, television and press interest and the press section expects television cameras to be at Downing Street when you return tonight. I think it would be a good idea if you would say something to them which would then be carried on the main news bulletin at 10.15 pm.

I attach a draft of a possible statement for you to make. You may like to discuss it with the Home Secretary when he telephones, probably between 7.00 and 7.30 this evening. He will be better placed then to advise you on exactly what you might say about an enquiry.

He intends to chair a meeting of Ministers tomorrow before he makes his statement to the House in the afternoon. I imagine that you will be content to leave him to chair the meeting but will wish to be present in the House for the statement.

CHARLES POWELL

12 May 1985

DRAFT STATEMENT FOR THE PRIME MINISTER

I was dismayed to hear of the terrible tragedy which struck the people of Bradford and their visitors from Lincoln on what should have been a happy and victorious day for them. My thoughts have been very much with them since I first heard the heart-breaking news yesterday evening, and again today when we had prayers in church for those who lost their lives or were injured. I have asked that my deepest sympathy be conveyed to the families.

I was able to speak this morning to Mr Heginbotham, the Chairman of Bradford City Football Club, and tell him how shocked and grieved I was by this terrible accident.

We must now make sure that we learn from this tragedy. I have been twice in touch during the day with the Home Secretary and of course Giles Shaw, the Minister in the Home Office, and Neil Macfarlane, the Minister for Sport, have both visited the Bradford City ground. I understand that the police, the fire brigade and indeed all the emergency services have been magnificent. The Home Secretary will be making a statement in the House tomorrow and it would not be right for me to comment more before that except to repeat my deep and heart-felt sorrow for the people of Bradford.

*PM has chosen not to read out
the statement, but may ~~make~~ say
a few words 'as the doorstep' on
return to No. 10.*

TO BE CHECKED
AGAINST DELIVERY

HOME SECRETARY'S STATEMENT ON FOOTBALL GROUNDS: FIRE AND
DISTURBANCES

13 May 1985

With permission, Mr Speaker, I should like to make a statement.

The entire nation has been horrified and appalled at the terrible tragedy at Bradford City football ground on Saturday. I know that the whole House will wish to join together in expressing our deepest sympathy for the families and friends of the dead and of the many who were injured, some of whom remain critically ill.

The fire started just before half-time, at about 3.35 p.m., under the floor at one end of the main stand.

The stand was an old one made of metal and timber with a bitumen and felt roof, and the fire spread extremely rapidly. There were about 3,000 people in the stand. The majority managed to move down onto the pitch; but a number tried to escape through the exits at the rear and found themselves trapped in a narrow alley between the back of the stand and the wall of the ground. In accordance with long established practice at sports grounds, the gates were locked to prevent unauthorised spectators gaining admission. It was here that many people died.

The Chief Constable of West Yorkshire has informed me this morning that he is satisfied that no more than 55 and no less than 51 persons died at the ground. Two others have died in hospital. The bodies of most of those who died at the ground have not yet been identified.

/In addition

In addition, over 200 people were injured, of whom 60 are still in hospital. 22 policemen were injured, of whom two are in hospital; and three firemen were injured, none of whom is still in hospital.

The cause of the fire has not yet been ascertained, but a team of detectives from the West Yorkshire police, assisted by forensic scientists and members of the West Yorkshire fire brigade, began sifting through the debris as soon as it had been made safe to do so. The police have asked for witnesses to come forward who might be able to give evidence about the possible cause of the fire, and it is essential that members of the public should give every assistance.

I should like to pay tribute to the courage and professionalism of the police and fire services. No-one who has seen the film of the events can doubt that as much as could be done was done to get people out of the stand, and then to deal with the aftermath of the fire. I would like also to express the warmest appreciation for the dedication and skill of the medical and pathological teams, the ambulance service and all the hospital and voluntary agencies who have since been working day and night, treating the injured and consoling the bereaved.

Further, the House will be aware that at Birmingham on the very same day many people were injured and subsequently one spectator died as a result of serious crowd disorder at the match between Birmingham City and Leeds United, arising from violence by groups of fans from both clubs. There were repeated invasions of the

pitch, missiles were thrown, and the police were attacked. In all there were 125 arrests, 96 police officers required medical treatment, of whom two are still in hospital, and over 80 spectators were injured. Some of the injuries were caused when a wall collapsed following a surge in the crowd, and it was a boy of 15 who subsequently died of the injuries he received.

This was a further example of disgraceful football violence, which illustrates the link between the problem of crowd safety and the problem of crowd control. With regard to this incident inquiries are of course also being made by the Football Association.

Investigations at Bradford are continuing and inquests will be conducted both there and at Birmingham. I shall expect to receive further reports in due course giving the conclusions of the police, forensic and fire brigade inquiries in Bradford and of the police inquiries in Birmingham. But over and above these particular investigations and hearings, the magnitude of these events demands that urgent steps should immediately be taken to examine what can be done to prevent such incidents. With my Rt Hon friend the Secretary of State for Scotland I have therefore asked Mr Justice Popplewell to chair an inquiry with the following terms of reference:

"To inquire, with particular reference to the events at Bradford City and Birmingham football grounds on 11 May, into the operation of the Safety of Sports Grounds Act 1975; and to recommend what if any further steps should be taken, including any that may be necessary under additional powers, to improve both crowd safety and crowd control at sports grounds."

I understand that Mr Justice Popplewell will visit Bradford tomorrow.

The inquiry's fundamental task will be to ensure that the demands of safety, on the one hand, and control, on the other, are not only each satisfied in themselves but also satisfied compatibly with each other. A subsidiary but important task will be for the inquiry to review what is known as the "Green Code", that is the "Guide to Safety at Sports Grounds", which provides guidelines for local authorities as to the conditions that they should require of clubs that seek certification under the 1975 Act. I shall ask that the inquiry should proceed with all possible speed, taking account of and supplementing, as necessary, the findings of the current police, forensic service and fire brigade investigations. I shall arrange for the Chairman to be assisted by appropriately qualified assessors - for example from the police and fire services - and to have available such technical advice and support as he requires. He will of course be able to make any further factual inquiries into what happened that he thinks necessary. If the Chairman thinks it necessary or desirable, I and my Rt Hon friend will welcome any interim report or recommendations he wishes to submit.

In addition, and in parallel with the work of the inquiry, I have decided to designate all grounds in the Third and Fourth Divisions of the Football League so that they become subject to the system of safety certification under the Safety of Sports Grounds Act 1975. The effect will be to require such clubs to apply for certificates

from the relevant local authority specifying in considerable detail what physical conditions and management practices - including as to fire precautions - must be followed. The Government announced only on 1 April that we should be extending designation to Third and Fourth Division grounds but starting with those with a record of club violence. It is plain, however, that the time for selective action has passed, and I shall accordingly be discussing with the football authorities immediately how universal designation may be implemented as soon as possible. It will, of course, be for the inquiry to recommend any changes in the present certification procedures or any other steps that should be taken to improve crowd safety and control. But I can see no reason why designating the Third and Fourth Division clubs or any of the other steps announced on 1 April should wait on their conclusions. It is clearly important that the public should be given all the protection that the existing law allows as quickly as possible, and that any measures to enhance safety and security that can be introduced speedily as a result of the work that has currently been proceeding should be implemented at the earliest possible date.

To ensure that the measures I have announced of a swift inquiry and a new programme of designation do not leave gaps meanwhile in public protection, I am asking chief fire officers immediately to visit uncertificated sports stadia in their areas to advise management on what steps they should take to secure proper standards of crowd safety in their particular circumstances. They will no

doubt wish to discuss amongst other matters the opening and locking of gates at sports grounds. Whilst I imagine such visits will be the more comprehensive if chief fire officers are accompanied by other members of the local authority safety teams, this work will brook no delay and, for that reason, I consider the duty to fall best initially on chief fire officers.

I must stress that the measures announced today are additional to those announced on 1 April after the meeting at 10 Downing Street with the football authorities. That programme of measures agreed to combat football hooliganism goes ahead with renewed urgency.

The events at Bradford and Birmingham were in their different ways both tragic and sickening. Nothing will wipe away the memory of that terrible afternoon. But our task now must be to take urgent steps to minimise the chances of recurrence. The measures I have announced today are designed to that end. I will report to the House in due course on their progress and outcome.

E. R.

IBROX DISASTER FUND

The Fund was launched by the Lord Provost of Glasgow immediately after the disaster on 2 January 1971, in which 66 people died. £361,000 was collected including a £10,000 donation from Glasgow Corporation which was approved by the Secretary of State for Scotland. **There was no Government contribution.**

The Fund was administered by Glasgow District Council's finance department and 12 children of the victims are currently receiving montly payments from the Fund. These will continue until their 18 birthdays and last payments will be made in 1989.

The money collected was distributed as follows:

Grants to injured	£ 30,000
" to widows	£142,000
" to children	£120,000
" to parents	£ 56,000
" to funerals	£ 13,500